

REMARKS

The Office Action dated August 22, 2006 has been received and carefully considered. The above amendments and the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response to the Office Action.

According to the Office Action, claims 11 to 20, 22, and 23 have been allowed. Claims 2 to 6, 8, and 9 remain withdrawn from consideration due to an earlier election of species requirement.

Claims 1, 7, 10 and 21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Saeki (JP 2001-71577).

Claim 1 has been amended to recite additional subject matter. The added subject matter is clearly present in and supported by the elected embodiment (FIGS. 16 to 24).

More specifically, with reference for example to FIG. 17, the features added to the independent claim include:

an adjusting member which adjusts a distance between said first member (302) and said second member (304), wherein said adjusting member comprises an adjusting screw (210) which is screwed with said first member (302); and

an elastic member (78) which is provided between said adjusting member and said first member (302), said elastic member (78) fitted over said adjusting screw (210) and providing a biasing force acting in a direction to urge a head portion (94) of said adjusting screw (210) away from said first member (302).

It is noted, incidentally, that the feature of an adjusting screw was also recited in non-elected and withdrawn claim 6, and accordingly claim 6 has been amended in recognition of the amendments made to claim 1. Nevertheless, as demonstrated above,

the features recited in amended claim 1 are fully supported by the elected embodiment, and indeed, by all embodiments of the present invention. Therefore, the amendments to claim 1 do not rely on any non-elected subject matter, and hence, the amendments are proper.

Turning to the cited prior art, JP 2001-71577 discloses a tension mechanism T for applying tension to a belt 4 used to transport an ink carriage 5. The tension mechanism T includes a belt holder 7 disposed inside guide walls 11, wherein a spring 8 is provided, which pulls on the belt holder 7 for pulling the belt holder 7 in a direction toward a support post 9. Another end of the belt is held by a second belt holder or fitting 10 attached on another side of the ink carriage 5. Hence, tension is maintained on the belt 4 by the pulling force exerted by the spring 8.

However, in JP 2001-71677 there is no means for adjusting the position of the first belt holder 7 with respect to the second belt holder 10. That is, aside from the spring itself, which provides a constant tension on the belt, there is no mechanism that permits one to actually adjust the distance between the first and second belt holders. There is certainly no suggestion in JP 2001-71677 for the features currently recited in amended claim 1, including "an adjusting screw which is screwed with said first member" and "an elastic member (78) ... fitted over said adjusting screw and providing a biasing force acting in a direction to urge a head portion of said adjusting screw away from said first member (302)."

For the foregoing reasons, therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the features recited in amended claim 1 are not shown or suggested by JP 2001-71577. Thus, claim 1, along with dependent claims 7, 10 and 21, are allowable over the cited prior art.

With respect to the non-elected claims, insofar as independent claim 1 remains a generic claim with respect to all recited embodiments of the invention, as provided by 37 CFR § 1.141, the applicant is now entitled to consideration and allowance of any claims dependent on claim 1. In particular, in light of the amendments to claim 1, claims 2-6, 8 and 9 should also be in condition for allowance.

In summary, it is respectfully submitted that the claimed invention is not anticipated and would not have been obvious to a person skilled in the art at the time the present invention was made. Withdrawal of the rejections, and allowance of all pending claims 1 to 23, is respectfully requested.

No fees are currently due. Notwithstanding, any fees, or deficiencies in fees, that may be considered necessary in connection with this or any accompanying communication may be charged to the attorney's deposit account no. 07-2519.

Respectfully submitted,



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